

Subject Duluth Seaway Port Authority, meetings by telephone or other electronic means

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Overview

Allows the Duluth Seaway Port Authority to conduct meetings by telephone or other electronic means, the same as a state entity. Effective the day after enactment. The St. Paul Port Authority was given the same authority in 2014. Minn. Stat. § 469.084, subd. 1a.

Under the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, a state entity (but not a local government) has general authority to hold meetings by telephone or other electronic means as long as specified conditions are met to ensure openness and accessibility for those who wish to attend. In general, those conditions include the following:

- All members of the body can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony.
- Members of the public at the regular meeting location can hear all discussion, testimony, and votes.
- At least one member of the body is present at the regular meeting location.
- All votes are conducted by roll call.
- The public body must allow a person to monitor the meeting electronically from another location. The body may require the person to pay for any documented additional costs the body incurs as a result of the additional connection.
- The public body must give notice of the regular meeting location, of the fact that some members may participate by telephone or other electronic means, and of the right of the public to monitor the meeting from another location. In addition, the public body must post the notice on its website at least ten days before any regular meeting.

Local governments only have authority to conduct a meeting by telephone or other electronic means if a health pandemic or other emergency makes meeting in person impractical or imprudent and all of the same conditions as for other meetings held by telephone or other electronic means are met, unless unfeasible due to the pandemic or emergency. Various statutes for specific public bodies also allow for meetings by interactive television, telephone, or other electronic means.

The port authority is established in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 469, and the membership consists of seven commissioners: three appointed by the Duluth city council; two by the St. Louis County board; and two by the governor. It also includes as advisory members a member of the St. Louis County delegation of the state house of representatives appointed by that delegation, and a member of the St. Louis County delegation of the state senate appointed by that delegation.



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